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TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Return of Memorable Day Brings About Stories of the Great Battle Of April 21, 1836

Galveston, Tex., Apr. 18.—Independence—that freedom, most loved by human heart, for which men give their lives, and women give their hopes for life—the independence of a United community from the domination of an oppressor was secured for Texas, the Lone Star Republic, just 78 years ago Tuesday.

On the wooded banks of the swift flowing San Jacinto river, about 40 miles from Galveston, on the eventful 21st of April, 1836, a little band of patriotic Texans, moved by the longing of just such liberty as the colonists secured when they followed the Boston tea party with the war for independence for England, met and defeated a horde of invading Mexicans under the command of General Santa Anna, the iron general, under whose leadership a war had been carried on to prevent the northern part of Mexico from seceding.

In killed wounded and captured, the Mexicans lost practically the entire army, while Texas lost but two men killed in the conflict. It was one of the historic battles of the world—was one of those rare events whose outcome is the destiny of a nation and whose memory is a people's glory.

death, knew this; for they fought sternly and yielded not until the enemy called surrender and laid down his arms. And when it is remembered that there were only about 40,000 whites—less than the population of Galveston—in Texas at that time, the achievement which virtually human at the Alamo and ended at San Jacinto, seems all the more remarkable; for Mexico could raise armies many times sufficient to crush the handful of white soldiers, had not the latter been inspired with the love of country and desire for freedom.

"Remember the Alamo!" Inspired with memories of martyrs who had fallen in the same cause, urged on by the love of family and friends, beside and nation, the Texas patriots, led by General Sam Houston, charged point-blank into the breastworks that had been erected by the invaders. Unavailing were the discharges of grape and cannister from the Mexican artillery; of no power to stop the victorious charge was the desperate though short hand-to-hand encounter at the breastworks; useless the attempt at flight. General Santa Anna, his sub-commanders and a large portion of his men were captured. One-third had been killed and as many more wounded; of the remainder, chroniclers say, but few escaped the destiny of a nation and whose memory is a people's glory.

The conflict, according to General Sam Houston himself, was a short one, the actual fighting being over in about 15 minutes, although much more time was occupied with forming for battle and deploying troops, while the chase participated in by the cavalry and such infantrymen as could run fast enough lasted several hours. But it was bloody and decisive; at its close there was no longer any doubt of the independence of the new nation.

The warfare did not end immediately, however, for a period of 10 years following the battle, the new republic was plunged into struggle with Mexico first on her own resources, and later, with the assistance of the United States. While the first government was founded without resources and without credit, the bravery and patriotism of her people, coupled with the aid of that country of which she is now an integral part, overcame all difficulties, and she took a place among the nations of the world.

Although she united with the great American republic after her Mexican troubles were settled, Texas has never lost her own individuality. The invasion of home seekers from the North did not change the character of Texas people—rather Texas assimilated the newcomers, infused them with the spirit of Sam Houston and made them a new

generation of Texans to perpetuate the memory and spirit of Sam Houston. But she has grown—grown into a mighty state, a factor in the nation, a producer of mineral and agricultural wealth, the home of many people. Texas cotton clothes half the world; Texas vegetables and fruits supply the tables of the North when the ice and snow lie on the Northern fields. Texas beehives are slaughtered by the thousands, that the people of the country and others may partake of juicy roasts. Texas coal is mined, and Texas iron ore dug from the bowels of the earth, while her railroads and rivers carry daily many thousands of tons of freight and many hundreds of souls. And still, she remembers the Alamo!

General Houston's Report
How the battle was fought and its results, are best told by General Sam Houston himself. His official report, transmitted four days after the battle, to the President of the republic, and signed in his own handwriting, a copy of which, signed by Houston's autograph, was found some weeks ago among the archives of The News, preserved for long years in the vaults with other documents, which every his newspaper files away for reference.

The paper is yellowed with age. Evidently written by an amanuensis, the writing is small but very clear, almost like a steel engraving. At the bottom of the four closely written sheets is appended a phrase in Sam Houston's own handwriting, with his signature, which is reproduced. The document is as follows:

"Headquarters of the Army, San Jacinto, 25th April, 1836.

"To His Excellency D. G. Burnett, President of the Republic of Texas.

"Sir—I regret extremely that my situation since battle of the 21st has been such as to prevent my rendering to you my official report of the same previous to this time.

"I have the honor to inform you that on the evening of the 18th inst., after a forced march of 55 miles, which was effected in two days and a half, the army arrived opposite Harrisburg. That evening a courier of the enemy was taken, from which I learned that General Santa Anna, with one division of his choice troops, had marched in the direction of Lynch's ferry, on the San Jacinto, burning Harrisburg as they passed down. The army was ordered to be in readiness to march early on the next morning. The main body effected a passing over Buffalo bayou, below Harrisburg, on the morning of the 19th, having left the baggage, sick and a sufficient camp guard in the rear. We continued the march throughout the night, making but one halt in the prairie for a short time, and without refreshment.

"At daylight, we resumed the line of march, and in a short distance our scouts encountered those of the enemy, and we received information that General Santa Anna was at New Washington, and would that day take up his line of march for Anahuac, crossing at Lynch's. The Texas army halted within half a mile of the ferry in some timber, and men engaged in slaughtering beehives when the army of General Santa Anna was discovered to be approaching in battle array, having been encamped at Clipperton's Point, eight miles below.

Formed Battle Array
Disposition was immediately made of our forces and preparation for his reception. He took a position with his infantry and artillery in the center, occupying an island of timber, his cavalry covering the left flank. The artillery then opened upon our encampment, consisting of one double fortified brass 12-pounder. The infantry in column, advanced with the design of charging our lines, but were repulsed by a discharge from our grape and cannister from our artillery, consisting of two 6-pounders. The enemy had occupied a piece of timber within rifle-shot of the left wing of our army, from which an occasional interference of small arms took place between the troops, until the enemy withdrew to a position on the banks of the San Jacinto, about three-quarters of a mile from our encampment and commenced a fortification. A short time before sunset, our mounted men, about 80 in number, under the special command of Col. Sherman, marched out for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy. While advancing, they received a volley from the enemy's infantry, and after a sharp encounter with the cavalry, in which ours acted extremely well, and performed some feats of daring chivalry, they retired in good order, having had two men wounded severely and several horses killed. In the meantime the infantry under the command of Lieutenant Miller and Col. Burleson's regiment, with the artillery, had marched out for the purpose of covering the retreat of the cavalry, if necessary. All then fled back to our encampment in good order about sunset and remained without any extraordinary action until the 21st, at 2 o'clock, taking the first refreshment

which they had enjoyed for two days.

Mexicans Erect Breastworks

"The enemy, in the meantime having extended the left flank of their infantry so as to occupy the extreme point of a skirt of timber on the bank of the San Jacinto, and securing their left by a fortification about five feet high constructed of packs and baggage, leaving an opening in the center of the breastworks, in which their artillery was placed, their cavalry upon their left wing. About 9 o'clock on the morning of the 21st, the enemy was reinforced by 500 choice troops under the command of Gen. Coc, increasing their effective force to upward of 1,500 men, while our aggregate force on the field numbered 732. At 3:30 o'clock in the evening, I ordered the officers of the Texas army to parade their respective commands, having in the meantime ordered a bridge on the only road communicating with the Brazos—distant eight miles from our encampment—to be destroyed, thus cutting off all possibility of escape.

"Our troops paraded with alacrity and spirit, and were anxious for the contest. Their conscious disparity in numbers only seemed to increase their enthusiasm and confidence and heightened their anxiety for the conflict. Our situation afforded me an opportunity of making the arrangement preparatory to the attack without exposing our designs to the enemy. The First Regiment, commanded by Col. Burleson, was assigned the center; the Second Regiment, under command of Col. Sherman, formed the left wing of the army; the artillery, under the special command of Col. Geo. M. Hockley, Inspector General, was placed on the right of the First Regiment and four companies of infantry, under the command of Lieut. Col. Henry Milard, against the artillery upon the right of our cavalry, Col. Mirabeau de Lamar (whose gallant and daring conduct on the previous day had attracted the admiration of his comrades and called him to that station) placed on our extreme right, completed our lines.

The Battle

"Our cavalry was first dispatched to the front of the enemy's left for the purpose of attracting their notice, whilst an extensive island of timber afforded us an opportunity of concentrating our forces and displaying from that point agreeably to the previous design of the troops. Every evolution was performed with alacrity, the whole advancing rapidly, in line, and through an open prairie, without any protection whatever for our men. The artillery advanced and took station within 200 yards of the enemy's breastworks and commenced an effective fire with grape and cannister.

"Col. Sherman, with his regiment having commenced the action upon our left wing, the whole line, at the center and on the right, advancing in double-quick time, rang the war cry: 'Remember the Alamo!' repulsing the enemy's fire and advancing within point-blank shot before a place was discharged from our lines.

"Our line advanced without a halt until they were in possession of the woodland and the enemy's breastworks. The right wing of Burleson and the left of Milard, taking possession of the breastworks; our artillery having gallantly charged up within 70 yards of the enemy's cannon, when it was taken by our troops. The conflict lasted about 15 minutes from the time of close action until we were in possession of the enemy's encampment, taking one piece of cannon loaded, four stands of colors, all their camp equipment, stores and baggage.

"Our cavalry had charged and routed that of the enemy upon the right and given pursuit to the fugitives, which did not cease until they arrived at the bridge which I have mentioned before. Captain Kearnes (always amongst the foremost in danger) commanded the pursuers. The conflict in the breastworks lasted but a few minutes. Many of the troops encountered hand-to-hand, and not having the advantage of bayonets on our side, our riflemen used their pieces as war clubs, breaking many of them off at the breech. The rout commenced at 4:30 o'clock, and the pursuit of the main army continued until twilight. A guard was then left in charge of the enemy's encampment, and our army returned with our killed and wounded.

Only Two Texans Killed

"In the battle, our loss was two killed and 21 wounded, six of which proved mortal. The enemy's loss was 630 killed, among which were one General Officer, four Colonels, two Lieutenant Colonels, five Captains, 12 Lieutenants; wounded, 265; of which were five Colonels, three Lieutenant Colonels, seven Captains, one Cadet, prisoners, 750—General Santa Anna, Gen. Coc, four Colonels, Aldon to Gen. Santa Anna, and the Colonel of the Gunner's Battalion are included in the number. General Santa Anna was not taken until the 23rd, and Gen. Coc on yesterday, few have been captured.

"About 200 muskets, 100 sabres and

500 pistols have been collected since the battle. Several hundred mules and horses were taken and near \$12,000 in specie.

"For several days previous to the action our troops were engaged in forced march, exposed to excessive rains and the additional inconvenience of extremely bad roads, fully supplied with rations and clothing, yet amid every difficulty, they bore up with cheerfulness and fortitude, and performed their marches with spirit and alacrity—there was no murmuring.

"Previous to and during the action my staff evinced every disposition to be useful and were actively engaged in their duties in the conflict. I am sure they demeaned themselves in such a manner as proved them worthy members of the Army of San Jacinto. Col. T. I. Rusk, Secretary of War, was on the field for weeks; his services had been highly beneficial to the army. In battle he was on the left wing when Col. Sherman's command first encountered and drew the enemy; he bore himself gallantly and continued his efforts and activities, remaining with the prisoners until resistance ceased.

"I have the honor of transmitting herewith a list of all the officers and men who were engaged in the action, which I respectfully request may be published as an act of justice to the individuals. For the Commanding General to attempt discrimination as to the conduct of those who were commanded, would be impossible. Our success in the action was conclusive proof of their daring intrepidity and courage. Every officer and man proved himself worthy of the cause in which he battled, while the triumph received a lustre from the humanity which characterized their conduct after victory, and richly entitled them to the admiration and gratitude of their General. Nor should we withhold the tribute of our grateful thanks to that Being who rules the destinies of nations and has, in the time of greatest need, enabled us to arrest a powerful invader, whilst devastating our country."

The Messenger's Story

Another interesting document extant, having to deal with events immediately following the battle, is a description of the trip made by couriers from the San Jacinto battlefield to Galveston Island with Gen. Sam Houston's message to President D. G. Burnett, then staying with a number of refugees on the spot where Galveston now stands. The story was written by Captain R. J. Calder, one of the messengers, and was published by Master Gerald Waldo Hayes, in Galveston, in 1877. The book is now the property of Mrs. N. W. Mercer, a granddaughter of the author, who resides at 1815 Church street, Galveston.

Captain Calder tells therein of the coming to Galveston of a number of refugees who camped on the eastern shores of the island in scanty shelters, there to await the news from the battle known to be imminent. He describes the finding of the large amount of specie that was part of the spoils of the battle and of pursuing parties of the enemy in the vicinity of San Jacinto.

On the morning of the 23d, in company with three others, Captain Calder started in a small skiff down the bayou, to bring the message of victory to the President and the refugees on the island. That momentous trip he remembers very plainly, and he describes adventures in search of food, the four having consumed seven fowls and sundry other edibles at the first stop where provender could be found. Afterwards, during the journey, they had trouble in getting sufficient food, and they had to keep on through a cold rain that caused much discomfort.

Arriving at the bay, they were met by Captain William Brown, with a vessel, and conveyed to Commodore Hawkins in charge of the fleet, who had rested the weary travelers. Incidentally, the same pause for refreshment was almost the cause of their arrest, for President Burnett was offended when he learned that bearers of dispatches to him from his commanding general had stopped to dine and chat with others before finishing their official duty. However, nothing came of it, as Commodore Hawkins made personal apology to the President for detaining the messengers.

Captain Calder describes the rejoicing that the good news caused among the refugees, concluding with a narrative of a scare that was thrown into the temporary settlement when it was reported that a large force of Mexicans was approaching the unprotected camp. This, however, turned out to be a false alarm, and it was not long before the refugees returned to their homes on the mainland.

Orange Julius new drink is O.K. Manhattan, Pa., only. (18-11)

Mrs. Steve Collier, of a few miles north of town, was brought to the County Jail, where she was confined.